Early in June, the group was reinforced by the representatives from Georgia. They were more mature politically than other members of the group, and their arrival brought more clarity to the political alignment within the Duma. The most colorful among them was the gray-headed Isidor Ramishvilli, a bright although poorly educated village teacher. One of our precincts invited him to speak at an open-air Sunday meeting in a clearing in the woods, a couple of miles from a through road.

The place could be reached only by trails. Security patrols circulated between the road and the meeting place. A moss-covered rock served as the stand for the speaker. Some five hundred men had gathered when I arrived with Ramishvilli. The old man climbed the rock with youthful agility. Small and frail, with a deeply tanned, wrinkled face, he looked like an eagle perched on the rock, and his arms moved in the air like wings. He spoke broken Russian, with a Caucasian accent.

"Your cause, comrades, is a sacred cause! Sacred for all Russia . . . for all the world. . . . We can be crushed now . . . but we shall win in the end. . . . If we perish, our children will remember and bless us. . . ." Each sentence was a cliché, but his speech sounded like a song. It did not matter what the old man was saying. The crowd was fascinated by his high-pitched, trembling voice, his brown wrinkled face, and his gray hair flying in the breeze.

A patrol came running and reported that soldiers had been seen between the road and the clearing. But Ramishvilli objected to closing the meeting. "Come nearer," he shouted to the patrol. "Come nearer. Let the soldiers come and listen to the people's representative!"

The old man was talking about the work in the Duma when the white summer tunics of small groups of soldiers began to appear between the trees around the clearing.

"Come nearer!" he called. "Come, listen to a people's representative. Why should you carry arms among friends? Put your guns away. . . ." He continued his speech while the soldiers trickled through the crowd and pressed around the rock, piling their rifles at his feet.

After the meeting, the soldiers, joined by a young officer, warmly thanked Ramishvilli for his speech.

The S-D group in the Duma became a new source of discord within the party. The Central Committee, dominated by the Mensheviks, called on the workers to support the group. The Bolsheviks who dominated the St. Petersburg Committee described this policy as support of the Cadets. While the conflict concerning agrarian reform was nearing its climax in the Duma, the two factions in the